



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures 15.14

Subject: Adoption Assistance Case File Contents

Supersedes: None

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Applicable Practice Model Standard(s): Yes

Approved by:

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Application

To All Department of Children's Services Adoption Services Staff and Tennessee Licensed Child Placing Agency Staff

Authority: TCA 36-1-102(4); 36-1-201—206; 37-5-106

Policy

Adoption Assistance case files must include complete information about a child's eligibility for adoption assistance, applications, agreements, revisions, supporting documentation and case closure.

Procedures

A. Initial application The following adoption forms must be permanently maintained in the adoption assistance case file:

1. CS-0460, *Adoption Assistance Program, Application for Adoption Assistance*
2. CS-0461, *Adoption Assistance Agreements Applied for Prior to October 1, 1997*
3. CS-0513, *Adoption Assistance Agreements on or After October 1, 1997*

B. Initial supporting documentation

1. Cost of non-recurring adoption expenses is required when these expenses are included in the agreement.
2. Documentation of conditions or high risk factors upon which a child is approved for adoption assistance. If the child is under current treatment, documentation of current diagnosis and prognosis must be obtained from the treating physician, psychologist or licensed clinical social worker.
3. When the initial documentation states the child's condition is permanent (such as a child who has cerebral palsy), documentation only needs to be provided initially, unless there is a significant change in the condition. Document on *Form CS-0460, Adoption Assistance Program Application for Adoption Assistance*, the child's condition and the date of initial documentation.
4. When there is no current treatment or diagnosis, but the child has high risk factors that indicate there may be a future need for treatment (e.g., an abused child who needs future counseling) initial documentation must reflect the identified risk factor and how this risk factor was identified.
5. Documentation does not have to be obtained at the renewal each year until the child actually begins receiving that service. Document on *Form CS-0460, Adoption Assistance Program, Application for Adoption Assistance*, the child's condition and the date of initial documentation. The service cost and cost at the TennCare (Medicaid) rate would continue to be listed on the Application and Agreement each year at renewal regardless of whether the service was being utilized.

C. Extraordinary adoption assistance rate approvals

1. For a child who was in a DCS foster home prior to the adoptive placement, the adoption assistance case file must contain the following:
 - a) *Form CS-0562, Request for Negotiated Board Rate* completed in foster care within 6 months prior to the approval of the adoption assistance rate.
 - b) Part I of *Form CS-0562, Request for Negotiated Board Rate* reflecting the adoption assistance rate approval.
2. For a child who was in a Tennessee Licensed Child Placing Agency (TLCPA) foster home prior to the adoptive placement, the adoption assistance case file must contain

the following:

- a) Form CS-0562, *Request for Negotiated Board Rate* reflecting the adoption assistance rate approval by the Regional Administrator or designee.
- b) Written documentation to support the determination of the extraordinary rate.

D. Revisions in adoption assistance

Any revisions in adoption assistance must be reflected on appropriate forms CS-0460, *Adoption Assistance Program Application for Adoption Assistance*, CS-0461, *Adoption Assistance Agreements Applied for Prior to October 1, 1997* and CS-0513, *Adoption Assistance Agreements on or After October 1, 1997*, and must be included in the adoption assistance case file.

E. Supporting documentation for revisions

1. When benefits from SSI, SSA, or VA are being received, a copy of the award letter must be on file in the adoption assistance case file.
2. When a child enters residential treatment or state custody, written documentation regarding the adoptive parents' continuing support must be included in the case file. The amount and type of support (has to include some financial support) must be clearly documented in the case file.
3. When a child receiving IV-E adoption assistance turns 18 years old, documentation regarding the child's continuing handicapping condition must be included in the case file for the case to remain open. Unless this is a permanent condition, documentation verifying the handicapping condition must be obtained each year at renewal until the child turns 21 years old and the case is closed. The "*Review of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance for Child Turning 18, 19, and 20 Years Old*" must be included in the file to verify the Team Coordinator's review for continuing eligibility.
4. When a child receiving state-funded adoption assistance turns 18 years old, documentation verifying that the child attends high school (for agreements initiated after October 1, 1997) must be included in the case file. (For agreements initiated prior to October 1, 1997, documentation of full time attendance at any accredited school must be included in the case file.) Documentation verifying school attendance must be included in the case file at each renewal until the child turns 21 years old and

the case is closed. The *“Review of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance for Child Turning 18, 19, and 20 Years Old”* must be included in the file to verify the Team Coordinator’s review of continuing eligibility.

5. When a child is no longer eligible for IV-E adoption assistance and is changed to state-funded adoption assistance, documentation of school attendance must be included in the case file.
6. When a child who was approved for adoption assistance prior to November 1, 2004 and receives a regular or special circumstance daily rate turns 3 years old, the *“Review of Adoption Assistance Rate for Child Turning 3 Years Old”* must be included in the file to verify that the daily rate was decreased as appropriate.

F. Adoption assistance renewals

Adoption Assistance must be renewed annually and may be completed at any time during the year when documenting a revision. The items listed below must be maintained in the case file for each renewal, as appropriate:

1. A renewal letter (follow-up letter, if needed),
2. A **notarized** copy of form CS-0459, *Adoption Assistance Renewal Affidavit*,
3. Forms CS-0460, *Application for Adoption Assistance*, CS-0461, *Adoption Assistance Agreements Applied for Prior to October 1, 1997* and CS-0513, *Adoption Assistance Agreements on or After October 1, 1997*
4. *“Review of Adoption Assistance Rate for Child Turning 3 Years Old”*, or *“Review of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance for Child turning 18, 19, and 20 Years Old”* when applicable.

G. Supporting documentation for renewals

Documentation supporting any revisions made at the same time as the renewal must be included in the case file. (See *Section D, “Revisions in Adoption Assistance”*).

H. Termination of an adoption case

1. Part II, items 1, 2, 3, and 8 of the *Application for Adoption Assistance* must be completed and included in the case file when an adoption assistance case is terminated.
2. Copy of a letter giving written notice of termination and outlining their right to appeal.

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| I. Required signatures | All forms must reflect appropriate signatures as required by the form instructions. |
| J. On-going quality assurance of adoption assistance case files | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A supervisory review of ten percent (10%) of the current adoption assistance case files must be conducted every month or thirty percent (30%) of the case files must be reviewed on a quarterly basis.2. The “<i>Work Aide for Adoption Assistance Desk Review</i>”, “<i>Adoption Assistance Non-Recurring Expenses Review</i>” and “<i>Rate Review</i>” document must be utilized for the monthly or quarterly supervisory reviews and must be filed in the case file. |

Forms

CS-0459	<i>Adoption Assistance Renewal Affidavit</i>
CS-0460	<i>Adoption Assistance Program, Application for Adoption Assistance</i>
CS-0461	<i>Adoption Assistance Agreements Applied for Prior to October 1, 1997</i>
CS-0513	<i>Adoption Assistance Agreements on or After October 1, 1997</i>
CS-0562	<i>Request for Negotiated Board Rate</i>
	<i>Review of Adoption Assistance Rate for Child Turning 3 Years Old</i>
	<i>Review of Eligibility for Adoption Assistance for Child turning 18, 19, and 20 Years Old</i>
	<i>Work Aide for Adoption Assistance Desk Review</i>
	<i>Adoption Assistance Non-Recurring Expenses Review</i>

Collateral Documents

None

Standards

DCS Practice Model Standards – 2-102A

DCS Practice Model Standards – 2-104

DCS Practice Model Standards – 2-600

Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Handicapping Condition:</i>	Known and diagnosed medical, mental, or emotional conditions that will require periodic treatment or therapy of a medical or remedial nature.
<i>Supplemental Security Income (SSI):</i>	A Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes). It is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income. It provides a monthly cash assistance payment to help meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.
<i>Social Security Administration (SSA):</i>	A Federal Initiative that provides monthly cash assistance payment to individuals to eligible children on behalf of a deceased parent that was eligible for Social Security Disability Income or is the parent becomes deceased. The parent must have worked long enough and have paid Social Security taxes.
<i>Veteran's Affairs (VA):</i>	A Federal Initiative that provides monthly cash assistance payment to eligible dependents of veterans who died in active duty, who died of service related injuries, or who were eligible for veteran's disability payments.
<i>Title IV-E:</i>	A section of the Social Security Act that provides funding for the maintenance of children in foster care who meet certain Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligibility criteria and who meet certain legal requirements, e.g., best interests, reasonable efforts.